



EYFS Policy

Date	Autumn 2024
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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Aims

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

The Curriculum

The Nursery and Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive and support children's learning in all other areas. These areas of learning are known as the Prime areas. In Nursery classes in particular, the focus is very much on developing children's skills in the Prime areas.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and Language – Listening, attention and understanding, and Speaking
- Physical Development – Gross motor skills and Fine motor skills.
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Self-regulation, Managing self and Building relationships.

The Specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The Specific areas are:

- Literacy – Comprehension, Word reading and Writing.
- Mathematics – Number, and Numerical patterns.
- Understanding the World – Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities, and The Natural world.
- Expressive Arts and Design – Creating with materials, Being Imaginative and expressive.

Another important part of the EYFS curriculum is the Characteristics of Effective Learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers should plan activities with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Teaching strategies

Teachers should ensure that there is a balance of Adult-led and Child-initiated activities across the day. When the children are choosing their own activities, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to value, model, facilitate, demonstrate, question and extend what the child is doing.

Learning through play is an important part of the EYFS. The Keys Academy Trust believes that children in EYFS thrive when they are immersed in a relevant topic. These topics are meticulously selected based on the children's interests, ensuring that the learning experiences are both stimulating and active. This approach allows children to explore and develop their understanding, facilitating a meaningful connection with the world around them. We prioritise this method to foster a rich and engaging learning environment for our young learners.

Children will have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They will be able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives EYFS pupils the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children will learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

Adult-led experiences should be carefully planned for every day to enable teachers to develop children's specific skills and knowledge in each area of the curriculum. In Nursery these structured times should focus on the Prime Areas of development and early Literacy and Maths skills, as well as developing a love of music and stories. In Reception the Adult-led experiences should focus on all seven areas of the curriculum, and include a daily structured Phonics session and Maths session.

The EYFS curriculum should be enriched through a wide range of visitors, experiences and trips, such as meeting farm animals, drama workshops, parents sharing their cultural and religious celebrations, visits from police/firefighters/doctors, local walks, regular cooking activities, off site trips to farms/science centres.

Classroom organisation

The Early Years classrooms should have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure the children can access them easily. Both Nursery and Reception should be set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. The EYFS area has a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area, sand and water area, malleable play area, music area and outdoor area.

Planning

Staff should plan short thematic topics designed to inspire, fire the imagination and enthuse the children. Topics should be derived from children's interests with the staff team working closely together to ensure planned activities closely meet the children's needs. Planning will include Adult directed activities and enhancements to the continuous provision that the children can access during their Child-initiated activities. The children and staff should work together collaboratively to come up with creative ideas for how the continuous provision and role play area can be adapted for each topic.

In Reception, daily Phonics lessons should be planned and taught using the Essential Letters and Sounds programme, to develop children's skills as rapidly as possible from the first week in school.

It is important that the maths lessons adhere to the 'Mastery Maths' scheme, and are taught daily. This approach emphasises a practical focus on early mathematical skills, ensuring that pupils develop a robust understanding of foundational concepts, thereby enhancing their overall confidence and competence in mathematics.

Children's progress will be monitored closely throughout the EYFS, enabling the staff to respond quickly to any gaps in skills or understanding through Adult Directed lessons that focus on particular areas of weakness. Individual and group support will be provided to help children make rapid progress with key skills.

Assessment

On entry to Nursery and Reception, a baseline assessment will be carried out on each child against the Development Matters age bands and recorded on Target Tracker.

Reception children will be assessed against a government statutory baseline assessment within the first 6 weeks of starting school.

Ongoing assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

To document a child's learning and progress in the EYFS, teachers will collect samples of children's work, photos and observations, which form their Learning Record and create a detailed picture of the child. These Learning Records, together with staff knowledge of each child, will enable each child to be assessed termly against the Development Matters age bands and assessments recorded using the Sonar software. The progress being made by the cohort and individual children should be analysed at regular points in the year and any necessary implications for planning and teaching noted.

At the end of the Reception year, class teachers must assess each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and report to the Local Authority on whether their development within each ELG is either 'Emerging' or 'Expected'. This information will be communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and shared with Year 1 teachers in handover meetings.

Partnership with parents and carers

The Keys Academy Trust believes that the involvement of parents and carers in a child's education is vital and therefore staff should work very closely with parents and carers to ensure they are involved in their child's education. Staff should offer an open door policy where parents and carers are always welcome to discuss any queries or concerns.

A well-planned transition process should be in place to support children joining the Nursery and Reception classes. Nursery children should receive home visits, attend Stay and Play sessions with their parents and then be offered a short unaccompanied visit before starting Nursery. Children joining Reception will be visited in their current Nursery by their new teacher and invited to three school visits (one with their parents and two without) to meet their class and teacher. Parents will be invited to an information evening and tour of the school and Reception classrooms. All pupils should receive information packs before starting.

Once the children are part of the school we offer many ways for parents to be involved in and support their child's learning. One way is that parents are invited to join 'Evidence Me,' a platform designed to keep them informed about their children's development through photos and learning objectives. This interactive tool allows parents to review updates, provide comments, and share images that showcase their child's next steps in learning beyond the school environment. We also offer the following:

- weekly home/school books with activities to follow up what the children have been doing
- weekly reading books
- parent workshops
- Parents' Evenings
- Weekly newsletter updates
- EYFS Twitter channel
- Facebook and Instagram updates